

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 HELSIN 01698 081026Z

15

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 COME-00 FEA-01 ACDA-10 CEQ-01 CIAE-00

DOT-00 EPA-04 HEW-06 HUD-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 NSF-02 OIC-02 PA-02 PM-03 PRS-01

SAJ-01 OES-05 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 USIA-15 /105 W

----- 127975

R 080915Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8991

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 1698

FOR EUR/RPM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CCMS, SENV, FI

SUBJ: SAFETY BELT LAW AND USAGE SURVEY

REF: STATE 180684

1. PLEASE PASS FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION, NATIONAL HIGHWAY SAFETY ADMINISTRATION.

2. FINNISH LAW WHICH BECAME EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1975,  
REQUIRES USE OF SAFETY BELTS BY DRIVER AND FRONT SEAT  
PASSENGERS OVER 15 YEARS OLD, IF THEIR CAR IS EQUIPPED  
WITH THEM. (BELIEF HERE IS THAT YOUNGER CHILD MIGHT  
SUFFER MORE SERIOUS INJURIES IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT  
WEARING BELT THAN IF UNBELTED.)

3. THE INSTALLATION OF FRONT SEAT SAFETY BELTS HAS BEEN  
REQUIRED ON ALL CARS REGISTERED SINCE JANUARY 1, 1971.  
IF FRONT SEAT BELTS WERE VOLUNTARILY PLACED ON A 1970  
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PAGE 02 HELSIN 01698 081026Z

OR OLDER CAR THEY MUST BE USED. FRONT SEAT BELTS MUST

BE WORN AT ALL TIMES, EVEN IN TOWNS OR OTHER REDUCED SPEED AREAS. SAFETY BELTS ARE NOT REQUIRED IN DELIVERY VANS, TRUCKS, BUSES, TAXIS, AND CARS OF TRAFFIC INSPECTORS. IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES POLICY OFFICERS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO WARN THEM. A HANDICAPPED FRONT SEAT PASSENGER IS EXCUSED FROM WEARING THE BELT IF HIS ILLNESS OR DEFORMITY CAUSES DIFFICULTY.

4. PERSONS FOUND GUILTY OF NOT USING SAFETY BELTS MAY BE FINED, OR IMPRISONED UP TO THREE MONTHS. REPEAT VIOLATORS MAY LOSE THEIR DRIVER'S LICENSES. THERE IS NO LAW REQUIRING INSTALLATION OF REAR SEAT BELTS OR ANY CAR OR USE OF THEM IF VOLUNTARILY INSTALLED.

5. POLICE ARE AT PRESENT EDUCATING THE FINNISH CAR DRIVING AND RIDING PUBLIC ABOUT THE NEW MANDATORY USE OF SAFETY BELT LAW. THEY ARE ISSUING WARNINGS ONLY. LATER THEY PLAN TO ISSUE TICKETS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF PARKING OR MOVING VIOLATIONS CALLING FOR PAYMENT OF FINES. PRELIMINARY REPORTS PUT COMPLIANCE WITH LAW SURPRISINGLY HIGH -- ALMOST 80 PERCENT. HOWEVER, SAMPLE WAS SMALL AND AT LEAST SEVERAL MONTHS NEEDED TO GET MORE RELIABLE INFORMATION ABOUT COMPLIANCE AND MUCH LONGER TO ASSEMBLE DATA ON EFFICIENCY OF BELTS IN ACCIDENTS.

6. NHTSA MAY WISH ESTABLISH DIRECT CONTACT WITH MR. ANDERS TALLQVIST, TRAFFIC SAFETY BUREAU, MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, KAIVOKATU 12 A, 00100 HELSINKI 10, FINLAND. HE HAS OFFERED TO BE AS HELPFUL AS POSSIBLE IN PROVIDING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.  
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